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ABSTRACT

As part of a review of policies and procedures regarding postsecondary remedial education, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) administered two surveys in fall 1982. The first survey sampled 10% of the students who had transferred to the state's public universities from a community college in fall 1979 to determine why transfer students from community colleges might be required to take remedial coursework at the universities. The second study, a survey of 52 Illinois community colleges, sought to assess the effectiveness of the colleges' methods of identifying students in need of remedial coursework; the success of students who enrolled in remedial courses; and the overall quality of the colleges' developmental programs. Findings from the surveys indicated that: (1) students who earned associate degrees prior to transfer did not require remedial education, but those who transferred before completing a degree often needed remediation; (2) the most common methods of identifying underprepared students were standardized and college-developed tests, instructor/counselor referral, and student self-referral; and (3) the main method of evaluating student progress in remedial courses was through pre-/post-testing, while the primary method of assessing program effectiveness was through student evaluations. The studies resulted in a revision of ICCB rules governing and defining remedial education. (HB)

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REPORT ON REMEDIAL EDUCATION

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UC 830 209

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HIGHLIGHTS

Remedial education at the postsecondary level has received considerable scrutiny during the past five years. This report presents the results of an Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) policy and procedures review and analyzes the findings of two surveys administered by the ICCB in Fall 1982. The first survey, completed by all Illinois public universities, was designed to determine the extent to which students transferring from Illinois community colleges to Illinois universities may need remediation after transfer. The second survey sought to assess the effectiveness of remedial education programs in the Illinois public community colleges. The highlights of the report follow.

The ICCB policy and procedures review resulted in:

-- A revision of ICCB Rules defining and governing remedial education and the adoption of Rules defining and governing the Disadvantaged Student Grant in order to strengthen remedial education programs within the Illinois community colleges. (See page 3 for details.)

-- The reclassification to more appropriate instructional and funding categories of community college credit courses that do not conform to the revised definition of "remedial," effective for FY 1984.

The survey of Illinois public universities indicated that:

-- Students who completed associate transfer degrees prior to transferring to the universities do not enroll in remedial coursework, while students who transfer before completing a degree or who complete an associate degree not designed for transfer may need remediation after transfer similar to freshmen entering the universities. (See pages 4-5 for details.)

The survey of Illinois community colleges indicated that:

-- The community colleges are providing comprehensive remedial programs consisting of both formal coursework and support services. (See pages 6-7 for details.)

-- The community colleges have instituted a variety of methods to identify students in need of basic skill remediation. (See page 8 for details.)

-- The community colleges use a variety of methods to evaluate the effectiveness of remedial courses and services. (See pages 10-12 for details.)

-- The survey's attempt to obtain comparable outcome data statewide was limited due to the variety of program structures and student monitoring systems among the colleges and to the inadequacy of definitions in the instrument itself. (See pages 10-12 for details.)

Although the Illinois community colleges have instituted many changes in the past three years to provide comprehensive remedial programs within their districts and other changes are expected in the next several years, a more systematic means of validating the outcomes of remediation are needed. The ICCB's revision and adoption of Rules on remedial education, the Disadvantaged Student Grant, and program review and evaluation are important in setting future directions statewide. Additional steps by the ICCB may be needed to enhance the community colleges' abilities to fulfill their crucial role in remediating educational deficiencies of may Illinois citizens.

BACKGROUND

In 1977, concern about apparent declines in basic skills competency led the Illinois General Assembly to pass Senate Resolution 180, which instructed the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to report the extent of and need for remediation in all Illinois public education. The Joint Education Committee developed four policy recommendations on remedial education that were subsequently adopted by both the ISBE and the IBHE. This resulting IBHE policy on remedial education, as it pertains to the Illinois community colleges, is:

> Within the structure of postsecondary education, it is the community colleges (with their open admission policies) that should respond to the remedial needs of the postsecondary student. Community colleges have viewed and should continue to view the remedial function with equal priority to their other missions such as baccalaureate, vocational, and technical education. The community college should be recognized as the postsecondary institution where deficiencies in basic skills of adults will be addressed. Degree credit should not be awarded for remedial coursework.
>
> During the next five years, the emphasis on remedial programs at the postsecondary level should be at the public community colleges. Community colleges should be increasing their role in remedial programs while the state universities are decreasing their role during this period.

In 1979, an amendment to the Act creating the IBHE required the IBHE to report to the General Assembly the progress made in shifting the remedial education emphasis at the postsecondary level from the public universities to the public community colleges. The amendment reads, in part:

> ...By March 1, 1980, the Board shall develop guidelines which: (1) place the emphasis on postsecondary remedial programs at Public Community Colleges and (2) reduce the role of the state universities in offering remedial programs. By June 30, 1981, the Board shall report to the General Assembly the progress made toward this transition in the emphasis on remedial programs at the postsecondary level and any legislative action that it deems appropriate.

To comply with the law, the IBHE surveyed all public universities and community colleges in January 1981, requesting an inventory of remediation activities and a report on the future of remediation on individual campuses. As a result of this survey, the IBHE reported to the General Assembly in June 1981 that progress had been made toward achieving the IBHE's policy goals and that no additional legislation was necessary. In accepting the staff report of the results of the survey, however, the IBHE adopted the following resolutions:

1. The Board of Higher Education hereby requests that public university governing boards work with their universities to ensure that remedial coursework for regularly-admitted students and transfer students is reduced and that graduation credit for remedial coursework is eliminated. An assessment of efforts to

phase out such coursework, an evaluation of the continued need for remediation in special assistance programs, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of remediation for special assistance programs should be reported by governing boards to the Board of Higher Education by July 1, 1983.

2. The Board of Higher Education hereby requests that the Illinois Community College Board, in concert with community colleges, evaluate policies and procedures related to providing remedial coursework and determine why transfer students from community colleges may be required to take remedial coursework in public universities. An assessment of the effectiveness of remedial courses should be reported by the Illinois Community College Board to the Board of Higher Education by July 1, 1983.

3. The Board of Higher Education hereby requests that the Joint Education Committee review this report and continue to study the causes and consequences of the need for remediation.

To respond to Resolution #2, the ICCB: 1) reviewed its policies and procedures on remedial education, 2) surveyed the Illinois public universities, and 3) surveyed the 52 Illinois public community colleges. The remainder of this report presents the results of these three actions.

ICCB POLICY AND PROCEDURES REVIEW

The results of the 1981 IBHE survey of the current magnitude and future directions of remedial education in the public community colleges revealed widespread variation among the colleges in their definition of remedial education and in the classification of remedial courses. In the course of reviewing its Rules for filing with the Illinois Secretary of State, the ICCB determined that its Rules concerning remedial education perhaps contributed to the confusion within the system.

Thus, at its July 1982 meeting, the ICCB adopted Rules on remedial education, which were further modified at the March 1983 meeting, as follows:

Section 1501.301

c) 4) Remedial Education: A "Remedial Education" curriculum consists of courses in computation, communication (i.e., writing and speaking), and reading, designed to improve the competency of high school graduates, or the equivalent, to the level necessary for placement into communication and mathematics courses required for first-year college students. Remedial courses reiterate basic skills that students were expected to have mastered prior to entry into postsecondary education.

Section 1502.303

q) Remedial Course Credit: No remedial course credit shall be applicable to associate transfer degrees.

These ICCB Rules on remedial education bring the definition of "remedial" for the community college system into line with the IBHE definition and serve as the basis for classifying courses for funding purposes consistently among colleges. Any misclassified courses are being reclassified effective July 1, 1983, for FY 1984.

In addition to revising its Rules and course classification procedures for remedial education, the ICCB adopted Rules governing the Disadvantaged Student Grant at its March 1983 meeting. These Rules define disadvantaged student and establish parameters for the expenditure of Disadvantaged Student Grant funds. The Rule was designed to strengthen the counseling, tutoring, and other non-course aspects necessary to provide both remedial and adult education programs.

Also at its March 1983 meeting, the ICCB revised its Rules on program review and evaluation in order to provide consistency among the community colleges in the scope and criteria of the colleges' program review processes. This revision should result in a more systematic method of review of remedial, as well as other, programs in the future.

SURVEY OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

In order to "determine why transfer students from community colleges may be required to take remedial coursework in public universities," the ICCB provided each of the Illinois public universities a listing of ten percent of the students the university had identified as transfers from a community college in Fall 1979. Each university was asked to indicate whether any student on the list enrolled in a remedial course, according to the IBHE definition of remedial, since transferring to the university and, if so, in which skill area the student enrolled. (A copy of the survey is found in Appendix A.)

Table 1 on the next page presents the responses from each university. Four percent of the sample (33 students) enrolled in remedial coursework after transfer: six students in remedial reading, ten in remedial writing and 17 in remedial mathematics. The majority (22) of these 33 students had not completed an associate degree before transferring to the universities. To be counted as a transfer student, a student may have completed as few as 12 semester credit hours at a previous institution. These 22 non-degree transfer students, then, may be comparable to freshmen entering the universities. They may not have completed the lower-division general education requirements at a community college before transferring and were not certified by the sending community college as having completed these requirements.

The remaining 11 students did earn an associate degree before transferring. Ten students, however, completed an associate in applied science or other associate degree NOT designed for transfer, while only one student earned an associate degree designed for transfer to a senior institution.

The conclusion reached from the results of this brief survey is that students who earn an associate degree designed for transfer from Illinois public community colleges do not require remedial coursework after transferring to Illinois public universities. Students who earn associate degrees that were not designed for transfer or who transfer before completing a degree may need remedial coursework after transferring just as freshmen entering the universities may.

Illinois Community College Board

Table 1

ENROLLMENT OF 1979 TRANSFER STUDENTS IN REMEDIAL COURSES
IN ILLINOIS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

University (by System)	Number of 1979 Transfer Students in the Sample	Number Taking Remedial Coursework: Remedial Reading AA or AS	Remedial Reading Other Degree	Remedial Reading No Degree	Remedial Writing AA or AS	Remedial Writing Other Degree	Remedial Writing No Degree	Remedial Mathematics AA or AS	Remedial Mathematics Other Degree	Remedial Mathematics No Degree	Total Number	Total Percent
Board of Governors	(240)		(2)	(3)	(1)	(4)	(4)		(2)	(11)	(27)	(11)%
Chicago State	36		2	3		4	4		2	11	26	72
Eastern Illinois	63				1						1	2
Governors State	23										0	0
Northeastern Illinois	63										0	0
Western Illinois	55										0	0
Board of Regents	(267)										(0)	(0)
Illinois State	114										0	0
Northern Illinois	129										0	0
Sangamon State	24										0	0
Southern Illinois University	(140)			(1)					(1)	(1)	(3)	(2)
Carbondale	105								1	1	2	2
Edwardsville	35			1							1	3
University of Illinois	(172)						(1)		(1)	(1)	(3)	(2)
Chicago University Center	81						1		1	1	3	4
Chicago Medical Center	13										0	0
Urbana	78										0	0
TOTAL	819	0	2	4	1	4	5	0	4	13	33	4 %

SURVEY OF PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Scope of Remediation Activities

The community colleges in Illinois take seriously their mandate to provide remediation for postsecondary students in need of assistance. Most community colleges have well developed remedial programs consisting of both formal coursework in reading, writing, and arithmetic and tutorial and counseling assistance. State funding is provided for formal coursework through credit hour grants, while Disadvantaged Student Grants are provided to each college to support tutoring and counseling.

Table 2 on the next page shows the extent of formal remedial enrollments in the community colleges in FY 1982. FY 1982 enrollment data serve as the benchmark to determine the future impact of the ICCB policy and procedure changes made during FY 1983, effective for FY 1984. The remedial enrollment by program column in Table 3 includes only those students who enrolled primarily in remedial coursework; students admitted to other programs who registered for one remedial course are not included. The second column includes all credit hours produced by remedial courses for each college. Remedial credit hours account for 2.3 percent of the total credit hours generated by community colleges in FY 1982.

In addition to providing remedial coursework, all community colleges provide other assistance to students with academic deficiencies as well. Table 3 indicates the types of assistance or intervention provided by the colleges. All five types of intervention were provided by two-thirds of the colleges. Other interventions include block programming, special retention programs, peer advisory systems, various learning adaptations for disabled students, and special centers such as for women or minority group students.

Table 3

ASSISTANCE/INTERVENTION PROVIDED IN ADDITION TO REMEDIAL COURSEWORK

Types of Assistance/Interventions	Number of Colleges
Tutoring	48
Learning laboratories	47
Study skills/test-taking counseling	47
Career planning counseling	42
Self-confidence building counseling	39
Other types of assistance	21

To assess "the effectiveness of remedial courses" and programs offered by the 52 Illinois public community colleges, the ICCB staff, in conjunction with the ICCB Planning and Research Advisory Committee, developed and distributed a survey to all 52 colleges in October 1982. (A copy of the survey is found in Appendix B.) The survey sought to assess three aspects of effectiveness:

Illinois Community College Board

Table 2

FY 1982 REMEDIAL ENROLLMENT

Dist. No.	District/ Campus Name	FY 1982 Remedial Program Enrollees (Unduplicated Headcount)	FY 1982 Remedial Apportionment Credit Hours*
501	Kaskaskia	5	225
502	DuPage	(247)	(5,515)
	Main	121	2,130
	Open	126	3,385
503	Black Hawk	(3,410)	(3,182)
	Quad Cities	3,108	xxx
	East	302	xxx
504	Triton	4,945	538
505	Parkland	0	5,915
506	Sauk Valley	690	1,687
507	Danville	35	1,580
508	Chicago	(173)	(34,823)
	Kennedy-King	27	7,021
	Loop	0	1,286
	Malcolm X	0	5,010
	Truman	29	8,830
	Olive-Harvey	1	4,529
	Daley	0	1,221
	Wilbur Wright	0	1,591
	Urban Skills	115	4,282
	City-Wide	1	1,053
509	Elgin	165	4,223
510	Thornton	0	7,278
511	Rock Valley	476	4,471
512	Harper	0	6,048
513	Illinois Valley	22	1,109
514	Illinois Central	921	7,491
515	Prairie State	1	246
516	Waubonsee	1,981	1,733
517	Lake Land	375	1,898
518	Carl Sandburg	76	1,471
519	Highland	190	2,035
520	Kankakee	1,235	2,903
521	Rend Lake	53	954
522	Belleville	37	4,023
523	Kishwaukee	0	2,160
524	Moraine Valley	40	5,790
525	Joliet	1,881	7,479
526	Lincoln Land	79	2,360
527	Morton	593	694
528	McHenry	59	1,495
529	Illinois Eastern	(185)	(4,931)
	Lincoln Trail	9	1,330
	Olney Central	1	1,238
	Wabash Valley	81	1,177
	Frontier	94	1,186
530	Logan	281	948
531	Shawnee	2	565
532	Lake County	0	4,102
533	Southeastern	163	352
534	Spoon River	63	1,179
535	Oakton	265	9,680
536	Lewis & Clark	16	4,792
537	Richland	120	3,025
539	John Wood	38	347
601	State Comm. College	1	2,914
TOTAL		19,169	152,371

*Source of Data: Apportionment Claims

1. The effectiveness of the colleges' means of identifying students in need of remedial coursework;
2. The sucess of students who enrolled in remedial coursework; and
3. The overall quality of the colleges' remedial programs.

All 52 community colleges responded to the survey; however, Chicago City-Wide College of the City Colleges of Chicago does not provide remedial education programs and, thus, is omitted from the tabulation of results.

Identification of Students

The Illinois public community colleges use a variety of methods to identify students in need of remedial work, with the majority using a combination of methods. Since Fall 1980, after the action by the General Assembly, 54 percent of the colleges changed their procedures for identifying students in need of remediation in English (reading and writing) and 40 percent changed their procedures in mathematics. More than a quarter of the colleges plan to institute new procedures in Fall 1983, and an additional 36 percent indicated they will be making minor modifications to current procedures, such as revising cut-off scores required, for Fall 1983.

The most common methods for identifying students in need of remediation are the use of standardized tests, the use of college-developed tests, and student, instructor, and counselor referral or recommendation, as shown in Table 4. Fewer than half of the colleges rely on high school records (grades and rank in class) or ACT scores, although these often serve as part of the basis for counselor recommendations. Colleges that use ACT scores as part of their identification process tend to use the English score rather than the composite score. Because of their open-door enrollment policy and the high number of adults served, Illinois public community colleges do not require the ACT for admission.

Table 4

METHODS USED TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS IN NEED OF REMEDIATION

Identification Methods	Number of Colleges
Standardized test(s)	48
College-developed test(s)	40
Instructor/Counselor referral	47
Student self-referral	46
High school record	24
ACT scores	23
Other methods	9

Standardized tests are more often used to determine reading level, while college-developed tests are used more frequently to assess writing and mathematic skills. The most common standardized tests in reading are: Nelson-Denney with 27 colleges; the California Achievement Test and the Stanford Diagnostic Test with six colleges each, and the Gates-MacGinitie reading test with five colleges. Twenty-six colleges developed their own tests for mathematics course placement, and 23 colleges developed their own tests of writing ability, usually a student writing sample assessed by the English faculty, to determine placement in composition courses.

Table 5 shows the population tested in those colleges using standardized or locally developed tests and indicates whether remediation is recommended or required for those students scoring below the college-established cut-off score(s). As the table indicates, remediation is recommended by 40 percent of the colleges and is required for admission to (or for concurrent enrollment in) associate degree programs by 40 percent of the colleges. The remaining 20 percent require remediation for entry into some programs, but not into others. Students may be tested at one or more points, depending on the tests used. Some tests are administered during a new-student orientation period, while others are administered during the first week of class as a check on placement.

Table 5

POPULATION TESTED BY TYPE OF ACTION TAKEN
(In Number of Colleges Reporting)

Population Tested	Required for All Degree Programs	Required for Some Degree Programs	Recommended, Not Required	Total
All first-time freshmen	11	2	1	14
All first-time, full-time freshmen	0	2	0	2
All first-time, full-time students	2	2	2	6
All degree program admissions	2	1	3	6
All composition course enrollees	1	0	4	5
All composition and math course enrollees	3	1	5	9
Other	1	2	5	8
Total	20	10	20	50*

*The Chicago Urban Skills Institute does not offer degree programs.

Statewide, then, a variety of methods are used to identify students in need of remedial work and for determining appropriate placement in English and mathematics courses. The trend in recent years has been toward requiring, and away from recommending, remediation for those students found to be deficient in reading, writing, or arithmetic skills.

Course Effectiveness

The survey attempted to assess the effectiveness of remedial coursework by requesting colleges to track the success of students enrolled in remedial reading, writing, and math courses in Fall 1981 through courses enrolled in Spring and Fall 1982. The results indicate that few colleges keep records in the form the survey requested the data to be presented. Table 6 on the next page, however, presents results from those colleges who were able to provide data in the form requested for one or more items. By comparing the mean number of students enrolled in a particular skill development course to the mean number completing the course successfully, it can be estimated that between 57 and 63 percent of the students complete a remedial course successfully. The obverse is not necesssarily true, however, in that the students who drop out (and thus do not complete) may have accomplished what they intended to accomplish.

While it appeared reasonable to ask colleges the number of students who enroll in a regular course in the same field after completing a remedial course, difficulty arose in interpreting what "regular course in the same field" was. Since a reading course per se is not required at the college level, should enrollment in literature, history, or similar courses be counted as the "regular" course? Mathematics also is not required for all degree programs, but it may be needed for success in chemistry, physics, or engineering technology. Finally, for some students, the successful completion of a remedial course may indicate readiness for the next level remedial course rather than for a college-level course.

Table 7 below summarizes the methods the colleges use to assess the student's progress in a remedial course. By far the most frequently used method is the pre-test/post-test comparison, and, as would be expected, it is the most common method of evaluation in remedial reading courses. Of the twenty colleges that provided improvement scores, nine indicated an average improvement rate of 2 to 3 grade levels. The completion of pre-determined modules was most frequently used in remedial mathematics, with ten colleges reporting an average of 53-54 percent of the students completing the modules within the term. A "post-test" only was the most frequently used evaluation method for remedial writing courses, with eleven colleges reporting that between 50 and 83 percent of the students met minimum standards by the end of the term. Other evaluation methods included the evaluation of daily assignments, scores on daily or unit tests, and individual conferences with each student enrolled.

Table 7

METHODS OF EVALUATING STUDENT PROGRESS IN REMEDIAL COURSES

Methods in One or More Course	Number of Colleges
Pre-test/post-test comparison	40
Completion of modules	26
Post-test only	24
Other methods	24

Illinois Community College Board

Table 6

SUCCESS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN REMEDIAL COURSES IN FALL 1981

Enrollment Category	Remedial Reading			Remedial Writing			Remedial Mathematics		
	Number of Colleges Reporting	Number of Students		Number of Colleges Reporting	Number of Students		Number of Colleges Reporting	Number of Students	
		Mean	Median		Mean	Median		Mean	Median
Enrolled in a remedial course	46	120	67	46	149	75	43	203	142
Successfully completed the remedial course	43	68	43	43	90	54	38	127	83
Subsequent enrollment in "regular" course in same field	10	23	29	18	29	24	19	39	17
Successfully completed the regular course in same field	7	22	25	18	20	19	17	18	14
Enrolled in the college in Fall 1982	19	28	19	18	47	26	18	66	29

The survey's attempt to assess student success in remedial coursework proved to be inadequate, since data were not kept by the colleges in the form requested and since interpretations of the questions varied from college to college. The data that were reported suggest that approximately 50 percent of the students enrolled in a remedial course remove the deficiency in one term. Students with more severe deficiencies may require more than one term.

Overall Program Evaluation Methods

By far the most common method of evaluating the effectiveness of the total remedial program, both coursework and tutoring and advising assistance, is the use of student evaluations of courses, services, and/or instructors, as indicated in Table 8. Evaluation by the college's faculty and staff and follow-up studies of students are also relatively frequent. Fewer than half of the colleges have used a college-wide program review process to evaluate remedial education as a program. In many colleges, remedial courses are administered by the English and mathematics departments and are evaluated as part of departmental offerings rather than as a separate unit of the college.

Table 8

METHODS OF EVALUATING OVERALL PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Methods	Number of Colleges
Student evaluations	46
College faculty/staff evaluation	30
Student follow-up studies	26
College's program review process	19
External peer (visiting team)	9
Other methods	15

Copies of evaluation materials submitted with the survey indicate that the colleges' remedial programs are generally successful in the dimensions that were examined. Most evaluation activity has been formative, rather than summative, i.e., the evaluations were conducted to improve the program or some aspect of it, rather than to form a judgment of it.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Continued attention to remediation by the General Assembly and state education agencies alike has already resulted in an increase in the scope and size of community college remedial programs and in improved methods for identifying students in need of remedial assistance. Much more needs to be done.

The results of the community college survey point to a need to improve the means of validating both the achievement of the students and the achievement of the colleges in this area. Increased enrollments may indicate the numbers needing help but do not measure whether the help received was sufficient. Within the next two years, the community colleges expect to make additional changes in their remedial programs. Reported changes can be classified into five categories: 1) modification of present and addition of new remedial courses, 2) continued strengthening of student identification and course placement methods, 3) expansion of access through changes in course delivery, 4) improvement in the assessment of both the students and the total program, and 5) increased efforts to obtain, train, and retain high quality instructors. Although the instrument used in the survey reported here failed to obtain some of the detail it sought, the data that were obtained can serve as a benchmark for measuring future success.

Several philosophical issues have not been addressed fully at the state level, although individual colleges are grappling with them. The most important issue to be resolved is the seeming contradiction between the community college open-door policy, on the one hand, and the need to set program admissions standards in order to maintain quality, on the other. The state also may need to clarify its priorities among community college educational missions and see that state funding follows these priorities. Community colleges have been asked, in recent years, to increase their efforts in remedial and adult basic/secondary education and in the economic development of their communities. At the same time, however, state funding for all areas is being decreased. No college can continue for very long to add programs and serve greater numbers of people with declining revenues without adversely affecting quality.

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